



# Open Orphan: The World's First Covid Human Challenge Trial

## Situation:

Located in the U.K., Open Orphan is a rapidly growing niche clinical research organization (CRO) that is the world leader in the testing of vaccines and antivirals through the use of human challenge clinical trials. The company was selected by the U.K. government to help carry out the world's first COVID human challenge study. The study would infect human volunteers with COVID to test vaccines and anti-virals. Open Orphan was concerned that the study could be covered negatively by the media as there was significant lack of education/ awareness globally for human challenge studies.

## Solution:

FHM conducted a media audit of how human challenge studies were covered by the U.S. and U.K. media in the past. During this research, FHM developed a media target list of reporters with significant scientific background who would tell the

story with a view to facts and scientific evidence. The team also conducted social media monitoring heading up to the news announcement to understand negative social chatter and public misconceptions.

After research, we decided that our goal was to tell the launch story by leading with science. We utilized Open Orphan company spokespeople with clinical backgrounds. The firm also conducted media prep sessions with spokespeople in advance to review key messages that had been developed, how to position Open Orphan and asked "tricky" potential media questions.

## Results:

Embargoed media coverage helped to secure 100+ pieces of earned media coverage and 2 billion + potential media views. Media highlights included USA Today, The Guardian, BBC, and The Washington Post. The majority of media was positive and pulled through Open Orphan's key messages. After the announcement, Open Orphan went from a little known CRO to one of the fastest growing pharma services companies on the London Stock Exchange.

